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Another look at Anna...

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*“And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem,” Luke 2:36-38. [The Interlinear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible by Hendrickson Publishers]*

*“And was Anna a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she advanced in days many, having lived years with a husband seven from the virginity of her, and she was a widow years eighty four, who not departed from the temple, with fastings and petitionings serving night and day. And she at that very hour coming on, she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke concerning Him to all those expecting eagerly redemption in Jerusalem,” Luke 2:36-38.*

## Introduction

We are explicitly told in God’s Word to **“Remember the former things of old: for I am God.....Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.....,” Isaiah 46:9-10.** I have found in studying the time periods and prophecies set forth in God’s Word, that the ancient time periods recorded in the Word are being repeated in the end of this age, literally fulfilling the Lord’s declaration to His people in **Isaiah 46:9-10.** As God’s people study the Word today, they would be very wise to **“Remember the former things of old...”** and look for a similar fulfillment on a grander scale in the events occurring in these **“last days.”**

One of the time periods set forth in God’s Word that has intrigued me [*and others*] has been the two time periods given in the account of Anna the prophetess in **Luke 2:36-38.** Since the Lord has repeatedly used the time periods connected with events recorded in His Word to typify events that He would bring to pass in **“the end,”** then how do these two time periods in the account of Anna the prophetess fit into this picture?

In this study, let’s just see if we can find out.....

## The Setting

The setting for the story of Anna in **Luke 2** is the Temple of the Jews in the city of Jerusalem. Notice verses **22, 25, 27, 37,** and **38.** I ask that our readers keep this

setting in mind, for it is important in view of what I want to share about Anna.

In **Luke 2**, following the circumcision of Jesus and the purification period of Mary [**Luke 2:21-22; Leviticus 12:1-8**], Joseph and Mary brought the little Lord Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, and offer for Him the sacrifice required by the Law. As they came into the Temple the Lord God sent **two witnesses** to testify of Him before all those present in the Temple on that occasion. One of the witnesses was a man whose name was Simeon. The other was a woman whose name was Anna. We will refer to both Simeon and Anna in this study, but will emphasize Anna the prophetess.

## Simeon

As Joseph and Mary brought Jesus into the Temple, Simeon was already there. Simeon's name means "*hearing; hearkening.*" The text tells us that Simeon was one of those Jews who were "*...waiting for the consolation of Israel,*" **2:25**. In other words, he was a man of faith who had heard and believed God's Word and was waiting for God to raise up Israel's Messiah and Savior to save the nation, and give to them a kingdom of peace and righteousness. The text also tells us that the Holy Spirit "*was upon*" Simeon. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon "*...that he should not see death, before he seen the Lord's Christ,*" [*anointed Messiah*]. In order that this revelation might be fulfilled, the Holy Spirit had led Simeon to come into the Temple at this exact time. Marvel at the precision of our God, and give Him glory. Praise the Lord!

When Joseph and Mary brought Jesus into the Temple, the Scripture tells us that Simeon "*...took...Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,*" **2:28-30**. Since Simeon was holding the little Lord Jesus in his arms and looking upon Him, this plainly teaches that the Lord Himself is God's salvation and the Messiah and Savior of Israel. Praise the Lord! Compare **John 14:6**.

Then Simeon made a wonderful statement. Simeon spoke to Mary as he said, "*...Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel: and for a sign which shall be spoken against...*," **2:34**. We now know that this statement was a prophetic utterance. The "*fall...of Israel*" encompassed the rejection of Christ by the religious leaders of Israel, their persuading the people to crucify Him, and their lying to the people about the Lord's resurrection [*the "sign" spoken against*], and the subsequent scattering of the whole nation among the Gentile nations of the earth. Their fall was accomplished just forty years after Christ ascended back to His Father in Heaven. But it is not their "*fall*" that I am concerned with in this study. That is now history.

What I want to emphasize in this study is their ***“rising again.”*** Since the ***“fall”*** predicted by Simeon was fulfilled to the letter, we have good reason to believe their ***“rising again”*** will also be fulfilled to the letter.

## Anna's Entrance

As this scene was taking place, the text tells us that ***“...she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem,” 2:38.*** Did I mention the precision of our God? Give Him glory!

We are told that Anna was ***“a prophetess,” 2:36,*** and that she was ***“the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.”*** The word “Anna” is a contraction of the word, “Hannah.” This word means ***“gracious; she is gracious.”*** This tells us something about Anna's character.

Anna is stated to be the daughter of “Phanuel.” This word means ***“turning to God; the face of God.”*** This gives us insight into why she ***“departed not from the Temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”*** Serving the Lord God of Heaven had become Anna's passion for living.

She was also of the tribe of Asher. The word “Asher” means ***“happy; happiness.”*** Anna had found her happiness in living for and serving the Lord. What a woman Anna was; a true role model for all Godly women.

When we consider the meaning of each of these names as listed above, the statement Anna made, and the setting involved, I think it is safe to conclude that Anna is a type of Jerusalem and of those Jews who will find grace and happiness and ***“redemption in Jerusalem”*** as they turn to the Lord at the end of this age. Now let's see if we can verify this type as we look a little closer at Anna....

## Anna's Age

The first thing we are told that relates to Anna's age is that ***“she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity,” 2:36.*** This does not tell us how old Anna was. It only reveals that she was ***“of a great age,”*** that she was a virgin when she married, and that she had lived with her husband for seven years. That is all the verse says.

In the next verse the Scripture tells us, ***“And she was a widow years eighty four,” 2:37 [Greek text].*** For many years I assumed that this means that Anna was 84 years old, based on the English translation of ***Luke 2:37.*** *Shame on me!* After all these years of intense Bible study and preaching God's Word, I know better than to assume anything where God's Word is concerned. This Scripture does not say that Anna was 84 years of age. The actual wording of the Greek text and the Greek tense used

literally means that she had been a widow for 84 years following her 7 years of marriage. This entire text never gives us the age of Anna. All it ever says is that ***“she was of great age.”***

Therefore we can conclude that Anna was much older than the 84 years commonly attributed to her, the actual wording of this passage in the Greek text being my authority for making this claim.

## Check it out for Yourself

Some readers may not want to believe this, and pass it off as simply “my interpretation.” Suit yourself, but I would suggest that you compare the actual wording in whatever Bible version you are using with a number of other translations before you just dismiss what I am presenting. Prove this for yourself. Doesn't ***1 Thessalonians 5:21*** tell us to ***“Prove all things...,”***?

Folks, I have over twenty “modern versions” of the Bible in my library. I personally use only the King James Version in my teaching and preaching, but I have a collection of other versions on hand which I use for comparative purposes [*and to expose their fallacies*]. The Amplified Bible renders the verse correctly, staying true to the actual wording of the Greek Text. So does the Moffat New Testament, 1935 edition. Today's Bible Version also points out that the 84 years given is not the age of Anna, but rather translates it as the amount of time she was a widow. Most of the modern versions render the 84 years as the amount of time that Anna was a widow. Very few of them render it as her actual age.

What the inspired Word does say about the actual age of Anna is that ***“...she was of a great age...,” Luke 2:36***. In other words, her actual age is not given. What is given is the fact that Anna had lived with a husband 7 years from her virginity, and then had been a widow for 84 years. This makes a total of 91 years [7 + 84 = 91], but even 91 years is not the age of Anna. I don't know how old Anna was. This text doesn't tell us, and if the Lord had wanted us to know He would have clearly stated her age in the text.

## What Difference does it Make?

It makes a great deal of difference if one is going to use the time periods stated in this text as a type of a similar time period fulfilled in the end of this age. So what is the period of time actually and literally stated in this text about Anna? It is a period of 91 years! 7 years Anna lived with her husband, plus 84 years Anna was a widow, equals ninety one years total. 7 + 84 = 91 years. This is the period of time set forth in this account of Anna. This is the period of time we need to be looking at, rather than just 84 years.

Now how does this time period fulfill a similar time period at the end of this age? Let's see if we can find out.....

## A Brief History of Jerusalem

How old is Jerusalem? No one but the Lord really knows! Just like Anna, Jerusalem is *"of a great age."* Jerusalem was already in existence when Abraham met Melchizedek in **Genesis 14**.

The city remained in the hands of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the enemies of the Israelites, for several hundred years. Significantly, this is typical of Jerusalem during this present dispensation. In 70 A.D. Jerusalem passed into the hands of Israel's enemies. It was then occupied by the enemies of the Israelites for hundreds of years right up until modern times. Coincidence? I think not! Our God painted a spiritual picture in His Word for His people living today to look at, and marvel at His greatness and majesty.

In ancient times when the children of Israel finally came into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, Jerusalem was in the hands of the Jebusites, **Joshua 15:8; 15:63; 18:16; 18:28**. The children of Israel failed to drive them out, and Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Jebusites for several hundred more years.

It wasn't until the days of King David that the Jebusites were defeated and driven from Jerusalem, and only then did the city pass into the hands of the Israelites. King David then made the city his capitol. See **2 Samuel 5:5-9**.

I rehearsed this brief history to impress upon our readers, that just like Anna, we do not know the age of Jerusalem. Jerusalem, like Anna, is *"of a great age."*

## The Modern History of Jerusalem

What we do know is that after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the city remained insignificant to everyone but Jews and Christians for hundreds of years. Most of the rest of the world paid little attention to Jerusalem. It was only the Jews and the Christians, who believed the Bible, who held Jerusalem in high esteem during all those centuries. Why should anyone else pay attention to it? For hundreds of years it remained a small insignificant city in the Middle East. But during the first World War that all changed...

On **December 9, 1917** the Ottoman Turkish army fled from the city of Jerusalem, after having occupied that city for some 600 + years. Three days later on **December 12, 1917** General Allenby rode a white horse into Jerusalem in triumph. Thus began the modern history of Jerusalem.

## The Significance of these Things

Folks, I don't know how to apply every little detail in the account of Anna to the type of Jerusalem at the end of this age. Perhaps some reader can point out something in this account about Anna that I am missing.

What I do know is that the inspired record tells us that just after Simeon spoke about the *"rising again of many in Israel,"* Anna came on the scene and spoke about the Lord *"to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."*

We are now at the end of the present dispensation, and within days or weeks the rapture of God's people is going to occur and the Tribulation is going to begin on the earth. It is well known that, just as it was in the days of Anna, there is a remnant of the Jewish people today who are fervently looking for their Messiah to come at any time.

Today Israel and the Jewish people are right on the threshold of *"rising again"* as spoken of by Simeon, and *"redemption in Jerusalem,"* as spoken of by Anna the prophetess so many centuries ago. It is time to speak again, just as Anna did, of the Lord Jesus Christ *"to all them that look for redemption in Israel."* How is the Lord going to bring this to pass? By raising up *"two witnesses"* again, just like He raised up Simeon and Anna. See *Revelation 11:1-12*. Glory!

## Conclusion

I have taken another look at Anna in this study because I have been pointing out for several months that **2008** is the year that the Lord is coming to rapture His people to glory. I truly believe that the Lord directed my attention back to this account of Anna again. Why?

Because it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that from the time Jerusalem was freed from the Turks in **1917**, until the present time, **2008**, is exactly **91 years**.  $1917 + 91 = 2008$ . This is the exact same time period involved in the account of Anna the prophetess. Coincidence? No! I have to believe that it is the hand of God! And it is another confirmation that the Lord is coming to rapture His people [*true believers*] to glory this very year; **2008**. Glory to God! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

## ARE YOU READY?

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16.*

*"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36.*



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